



Why is High Blood Pressure Dangerous?

Most people with high blood pressure feel healthy and don't have symptoms. The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked. High blood pressure can cause:

- Stroke
- Heart failure/attack
- Kidney problems
- Eye problems



Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against your blood vessels. If this pressure rises and stays high over time, it is called hypertension.

What do your blood pressure numbers mean?

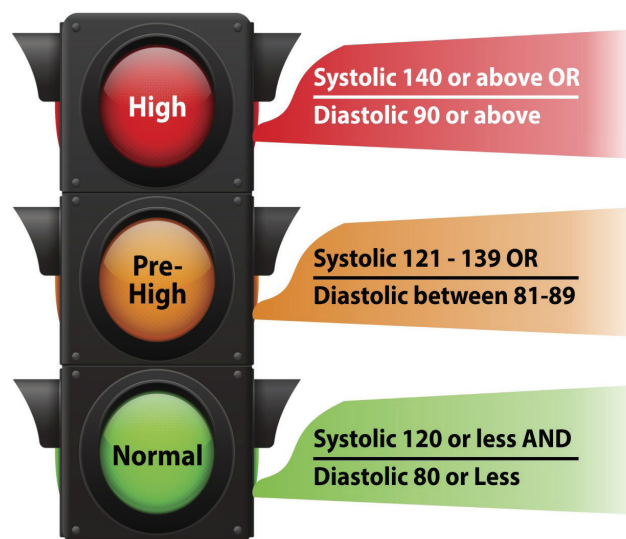
Blood pressure is measured by two numbers:

- Systolic – the top number is the pressure in your blood vessel when your heartbeats.
- Diastolic – the bottom number is the pressure in your blood vessels between heartbeats.
- A normal reading is a Systolic reading of 120 or less and Diastolic of 80 or less. Systolic readings above 120 and Diastolic readings above 80 is a concern to determine if you have hypertension. Always ask your provider what your blood pressure is.



Your provider will read this blood pressure as
"120 over 80"

The First (or top) number – **"systolic"** – is the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart beats. The second (or bottom) number – **"diastolic"** – is the pressure in your blood vessels between heartbeats.



What can you do to prevent or control high blood pressure?

- Quit smoking and/or chewing tobacco
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- Be physically active
- Reduce salt in your diet
- Limit alcohol
- See your doctor regularly

Only Hindsight is 2020

A View from the Mental Health Domiciliary Team Lead

"2020, I can see clearly now," read a January billboard as we rang in the new year," recalls Psychologist Stephanie Adam, Psy.D. and CVAMC Mental Health Domiciliary Team Lead. "No one saw the pandemic coming."

CVAMC social workers assigned to the Health Care for Homeless Veterans team continued to conduct outreach and made referrals to the most appropriate program. Veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse and mental health issues sought help and entered our residential programs through early March.

Resident programs increase the sense of safety, an essential element for anyone looking to decrease their own fear and anxiety.

With the onset of COVID-19 and the changes brought on by social distancing, Veterans, already isolated so they can focus on their recovery, were asked to further distance themselves. This isolated them to a point where the basics of recovery, structure and connection, were upended and difficult to achieve.

"If anyone can improvise, adapt, and overcome though, a Veteran can, and these Veterans are a testament to this unofficial military slogan," said Adam.

Program teams have transitioned in-person group recovery meetings to telephone conferences and virtual sessions broadcast using Facebook. Individual mental health treatment has converted to telehealth appointments conducted by phone or through VA Video Connect.

To better cope, many Veterans practice daily gratitude and turn to their faith for guidance. Chaplains have answered the call by providing live Sunday services and virtual Bible study targeted for our inpatients, but all Veterans and their families can enjoy. Providing these programs virtually encourages Veterans to stay connected to others through social media.

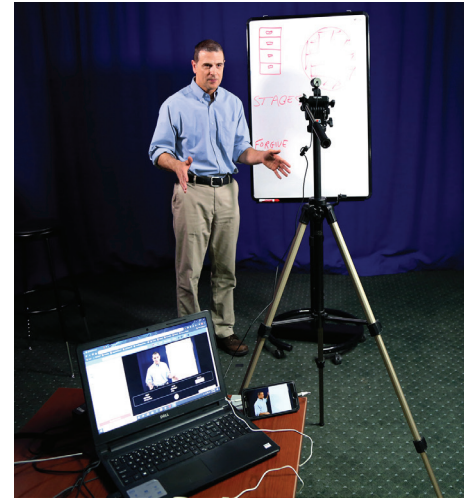
Connecting with others virtually is another way for anyone to reduce the stress brought on by isolation.

Adam, shared several sentiments from Veterans in her care, "While there are still moments of unrest, doubt, and fear, a message Veterans in our care want to send to the community is to be proactive, stay safe and they remind us only hindsight is 20/20."

While continually adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic, Coatesville VAMC

continues to provide treatment for addiction and mental health issues for inpatient Veterans and many more Veterans in the broader community in ways that keep us all safe.

Veterans seeking treatment for addiction or mental health issues should talk to their primary care manager. Anyone interested in joining our virtual groups, can contact the program coordinator or go to the CVAMC Facebook page click on 'Events' to see the schedule. Select 'Interested' to receive reminders and notifications.

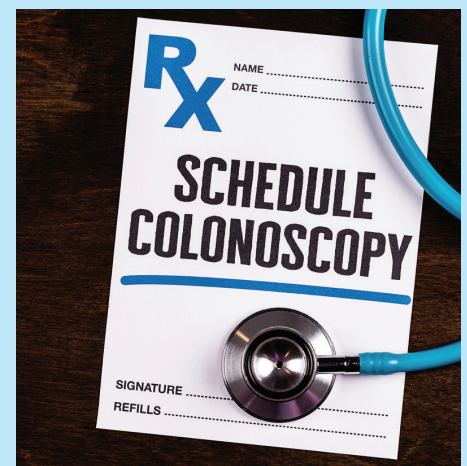


Chaplain Lance Qualmann connecting to Veterans and families through a Facebook Live broadcast.

Get Screened for Colon Cancer

Colon cancer is a leading cause of death among Veterans over the age of 50, but it doesn't have to be. Colon cancer screening can help in prevention, early detection, and treatment of colon cancer. Colorectal cancer rarely causes symptoms in its early stages, so screening for the disease is important. When the cancer is found and removed early, the chances of a full recovery are very good.

- Your risk of having colorectal cancer increases if you:
- Are age 50 or older
- Have a family history of colorectal cancer
- Have a personal history of colorectal polyps
- Learn more about colorectal cancer, its risk factors and screening options.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about being screened.



Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act 2019

This law extends benefits for eligible Veterans, who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam, or who had service in the Korean Demilitarized zone, and may be entitled to disability compensation for conditions that are related to herbicide exposure. To be entitled to disability compensation benefits, these Veterans must have served between January 9, 1962, and May 7 1975, and have one or more of the 14 conditions related to herbicide exposure.

For more information and to view the 14 conditions related to herbicide exposure please visit

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/blue-water-navy.asp>

We Serve All who Served

Did you know that the Veterans Health Administration serves over 1 million Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Veterans? This number is likely under reported, as some Veterans who served under the former "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" DOD policy may not feel safe to disclose this information with their health care provider.

At Coatesville, we welcome all LGBT Veterans and are working to become culturally-competent in LGBT health care. Our employee special emphasis LGBT committee highlights important months of observance within the LGBT community each year: LGBT health care awareness month in March; PRIDE during June; National LGBT history month during October; and Transgender Day of Remembrance during November. We also offer a weekly LGBT support group.

For more information, please see our webpage on the Coatesville VA Medical Center website located under "Health Care Services."



Audiology

To receive hearing aids or for hearing aid repairs, the Audiology clinic is the main point of contact for Veterans. Hearing aid products are upgraded every four years.

Audiology offers direct scheduling (Veterans no longer have to go through their Primary Care Provider to be referred for Audiology services). The Audiology direct clinic phone number is (610) 383-0217 and is located in building 69.

**For the latest
information
about the**

**Novel
Coronavirus
(COVID-19),**

**visit the
Centers for
Disease Control
and Prevention
(CDC), to view go
to www.cdc.gov**

REMINDER: Changes to Urgent Care Hours

- Phase III of the Urgent Care Center (UCC) operating hours transition took effect March 2, 2020. This is the final phase and no further changes are expected.
- UCC will be open weekdays from 7:30am to 5:00pm and closed on weekends and Federal holidays.

NO

**SMOKING
OR
VAPING
ON
CAMPUS**



Confidential chat at
VeteransCrisisLine.net
or text to **838255**

Coatesville Primary Care Clinic

24 Hour Call Line 610-384-7711

May enter the below numbers at any time during the call

- **Press #1 - Refill Medications**
- **Press #2 - Schedule or Cancel an appointment**
- **Press #3 - Speak to a Registered Nurse for health-related concerns**

Connect with us at
www.coatesville.va.gov and on Facebook



For updates about our medical center operations, please view the "Alert" & "Local Alerts" section on our website www.coatesville.va.gov.

It is understandable to feel anxious about the COVID-19 outbreak. There are some practical steps you can take to improve your wellbeing.

Make sure you follow the CDC guidelines to properly wash your hands, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, covering your sneeze, avoid contacts with those who are sick and by staying at home.

- Call ahead before visiting your doctor
- Stay connected with family and friends via phone, email, skype-video calls
- Try our Facebook posts for calming activities such as yoga sessions, chaplain sessions
- Give yourself small breaks from the stress of the situation by doing something you enjoy
- Draw upon your spirituality, those who inspire you, or your personal beliefs and values

Let's continue to do our part to take care of ourselves and each other. Thank you for your understanding as we navigate this tough time together.

